

## Christmas is Coming

### MORIEL ADMINISTRATOR

#### Introduction

The word for “Christmas” in Hebrew is “*Hag Ha molad*” – literally “The Festival of the Birth”.

It says in [Romans 14:4](#) not to judge anyone for what religious festivals they celebrate, and along similar lines, it says in [Colossians 2:16-18](#) not to let anyone judge you; it is a matter of culture and context that is strictly between you and the Lord. I could care less whether someone celebrates Christmas; it doesn't matter to me. What I *do* care about is the *theology* of Christmas, or the Nativity. When He was born, who knows? *That* He was born, we all know.

My family, being Israeli, celebrates Hanukkah. It is Hanukkah now. In John 10 Jesus celebrated Hanukkah – the Feast of Dedication. This is very important in understanding the advent of Antichrist among other things through Antiochus Epiphanes and the Maccabees. We have a Hanukkah party to which we invite unsaved Jewish people, which my family is doing this week while I am in America. Again, at our house we don't have Christmas, we have the Nativity. We go to our church, and we go to the carol service; that's all. We may do things for missions and for needy families, but nothing more than that. Christmas is strictly a church thing for us; we have Hanukkah as our celebration.

#### Christmas and the Last Days

What does Christmas, the Nativity, have to do with the Last Days? This may surprise you, but the answer is *everything*.

You may have heard me say before that we will never understand the Second Coming of Christ until we understand His First Coming. What happened in His First Coming is replayed, recapitulated, in His Second Coming. When Jesus was born, the Roman emperor was Caesar Augustus – formerly Octavius. He was the first Roman emperor to be deified in his lifetime. Thus there was a Roman emperor presiding over the Roman Empire and being worshiped as a god when Jesus arrived the first time. This emperor took a census, ascribing numbers to people – not actually putting numbers *on* them, but ascribing one to every person in the known world. There were actually two censuses taken by Augustus, both for this purpose: that he might gain financial control of the world. When Jesus comes back, the same thing will happen: we will have a resurrected Roman Empire headed by

someone who is virtually deified. This demi-god will number people's heads in order to economically control the world. What happened at Jesus' First Coming will happen again at His Second. Christmas is not just a past event; it is a future event, a prophetic event.

The book of Joel, the book of Revelation, and the Olivet Discourse tell us about signs in the sky and the cosmos heralding the return of Christ. Of course, as we know, there were signs in the sky and the cosmos heralding the birth of Christ. The Jews were in their own land, but under the thumb of this Roman emperor. How did he get there? By seduction – the Roman general, Pompeii, seduced the Jews and entered the Holy of Holies in the Temple. Whenever you see somebody other than the High Priest on the Day of Atonement entering the Holy of Holies, it is a picture in some way of the Antichrist. What happened with Pompeii in Rome will happen again. These events that we see happening in Europe and in the Middle East are setting the stage.

*Jochanan ha Matbiel* – John the Baptist – came in the spirit and power of Elijah. He was born just before Jesus and appeared just before Him. The prophet Malachi predicted that in some way, Elijah will come again; Jesus confirmed this.

There were many false prophets in Israel when Jesus came the first time, and many will be here when He comes back. The general backslidden state of the faith that should have believed in Him then is no different in many ways from the backslidden state of the faith that should believe in Him now.

Jesus' First Coming teaches about His Second. Christmas is neither here nor there; the Nativity, however, is very important. If we do not understand how He came the first time, we will not understand His return. There are differences, of course, but one is a picture of the other.

I have spent a lot of my time for the past 20 years as an evangelist to the Jews thinking about one question: How could it be, with 2,000 years of history preparing for the Messiah to come, being in a covenant relationship with God and having the Scripture, that so few Jews were ready for Jesus to come the first time? Paul tells us that the devil blinded their eyes. (Rom. 11:25) There were 2,000 years of preparation for Jesus to come, Israel had a covenantal relationship with God, and they had the Scriptures. Yet in spite of all this, only a remnant was ready for Him to come. The same thing will be true when He comes back, only it will not only be Israel, but also the so-called church.

What kinds of Christians are going to be ready for Jesus to come again in the Last Days? If you want to know the answer to this, look at the kinds of Jews who were ready for Him to come the first time. If you want to know what kinds of Christians are *not* going to be ready for Him to come back, take a good look at the kinds of Jews that were *not* ready for Him to come the first time. His First Coming

teaches about His Second; we will never understand His Second Coming until we understand His First. Obviously He will not come as a baby the second time, being born of an earthly mother. There are differences between the two comings, but essentially one prefigures the other.

### **Those Who Were Not Ready**

Before we look at what kinds of Jews were ready for Jesus to come the first time, let's look at Jews who were not ready. When we see what kinds of Jews were not ready, we will know what kinds of Christians will not be ready. A is to B as B is to C.

Turn with me, please, to Matthew's Nativity narrative in [Matthew 2:1](#):

*"Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, 'Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.' When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. So they said to him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet: "But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are not the least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel."'*

What we see here is that some of the people who were ready for Jesus to come the first time were people whom you would not have expected to be ready. These Magi, or wise men, were from Persia. They were the chaplains of the ancient Medes and Persians. Somehow in ancient Persia there was a religion that has been changed over the centuries, called [Zoroastrianism](#). It was monotheistic; they believed that there was one God and that man was responsible for his own sin. They believed there was a battle between the sons of light and the sons of darkness; they held similar beliefs, in other words, to those of the Essenes and the Christians.

During the Babylonian Captivity, when Persia overtook Babylon in fulfillment of Daniel's prophecies, some of the Persian kings came to believe in the Jewish God, having already been predisposed to monotheism. There was a lingering Jewish influence in that place. We read about Esther, for example, and Darius the Mede, as well as the prophecy of King Cyrus by Isaiah the prophet over 200 years before Cyrus' birth. We read in Ezra and Nehemiah what happened there. All the way through the Hasmonean period to the time of Jesus, the Persians favored the Jews. In fact, until the Shaw of Iran fell, the Persians – Iran – favored Israel. I have no doubt in my mind that the Prince of Persia, the principality against which Daniel prayed and fasted for three weeks ([Dan. 10:13; 20](#)), is still there today in the form of Shia Islam, that Islamic fundamentalism in Iran. People in modern Christian circles like to call demons like this one "territorial spirits", which is not a good translation or

interpretation. The Greek word is “*arche*”, the Hebrew word “*shedim*”; a better translation for these words is “principalities”, meaning demonic powers over nations. We have many crazy people today doing “binding and loosing”, among other nonsense, but there is no doubt about the fact that there are principalities over nations. The book of Daniel reveals that, and in Gerasenes the demons going into the swine begged Jesus not to send them out of the region. ([Lk. 8:31-33](#)) There are territorial spirits, if you want to use that term, although it is not a particularly good interpretation. They do exist. In Belfast, you see murals of ancient Celtic war gods on the walls, both in the neighborhoods where Protestants are recruited and in those where Catholics are recruited.

You see, those wise men understood how to interpret the signs of the time. Sadly, there are born-again Christians who cannot see the significance of contemporary events in the Middle East. They are blind to it, as if the book of Zechariah was not in the Bible. They cannot see what is happening in the EEC – they don't understand the globalization of the world economy, the destruction of the environment, or any of these other signs, as wise men do.

So the Magi came to see the Messiah, non-Jews, people you would not have expected, because they saw the Star in the East. Here we see that they come to Jerusalem, where Herod heard them and was troubled – and all Jerusalem with him. This was the city where David said that the Messiah would come. This was where the Temple was; the focus of their identity and their Messianic hope, yet almost nobody who lived there wanted Him to come.

You will find many churches with the same attitude; drive up the road, look at the churches you pass, and ask yourself how many of them really want Jesus to come back. All Jerusalem was troubled; oh, they had the rituals, the liturgies, the festivities and the holidays, but when it looked like He was showing up, they were all troubled. Especially troubled were the national and religious leaders. Think about this.

It gets even more frightening, however – these guys knew the Scriptures. Herod wanted to know where the Messiah would be born, and they told him what [Micah 5:2](#) said, that He would be born in Bethlehem. They had head knowledge of the Scriptures, but not heart knowledge. When He showed up, it was the last thing in the world that they either expected or wanted. Do you think it will be any different when He returns?

### **The Trap of Satan: Backsliding**

Almost every lie of Satan perpetrated in the church today is designed with one purpose: to get God's people to hope in *this* life and *this* world. By definition, that is what backsliding is. [Kingdom-Now](#) theology, [Dominionism](#), [Triumphalism](#), Calvinistic [Reconstructionism](#) – what are they all trying to do?

Set up the kingdom *now*; trust in *this* life. Faith-prosperity, the money preachers – teaching the sin of covetousness and calling it faith, the worship of Mammon and calling it the worship of God – what is it about? Trusting in *this* life.

Gerald Coates and Rick Joyner say that the Rapture is a lie of the devil, a fantasy and a myth. They mock it, comparing it to Star Trek's "Beam me up, Scotty". What is their purpose? It is to cause the church to forget about the Rapture and trust in this life. What do you think the ecumenical movement is about? Building the brotherhood of man – once again, trust in this life. All Jerusalem was troubled when He came the first time, and Jerusalem will be troubled again when He returns – and I don't just mean Jerusalem, Israel.

Their national and religious leaders, who knew the Scriptures, did not want Him to come. For 2,000 years God had been preparing them for His coming; the whole reason for their very existence as a nation and a people was His coming. Yet very few wanted Him to; and it will be no different when He returns.

### **Those Who Were Ready**

But what kind of Jews were ready for Him to come? Let's look: turn with me please to the gospel of Luke chapter one.

In Luke 1:46-55 we have the Magnificat, which if you read it in Greek would be a literary replay of the song of Deborah, found in Judges 5 from the Septuagint. The angel Gabriel – whose name means "mighty one of God" – came and told Mary that she was the greatest woman who ever lived.

"Blessed are you among women - God Almighty is going to be physically incarnated inside of you."

Her name was not Mary, but Miriam, the same as Moses' sister. The Hebrew root of "Miriam" is "bitterness". She did not have blonde hair or blue eyes, but rather dark, Semitic features. She has also never been to Medjugorje, Guadalupe, Fatima, or Lourdes. Her name is Miriam, and she was probably no more than mid-teens in age when Gabriel gave her this momentous announcement.

What does the greatest woman who ever lived say in response to being told that that is who she is? Verse 46 and 47:

*"My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior."*

The greatest woman who ever lived called God her Savior, stating that she needed to be saved from her sins. If the greatest woman who ever lived needs a Savior, where does that put me? None is righteous, no not one. (Rom. 3:10) All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (Rom. 3:23) The word "*Theotokos*", "Mother of God", is not in the Greek New Testament. She is told that she would be

the mother of the Messiah, who would save His people from their sin, and she responds by saying "I rejoice in God my Savior". God Almighty is going to be incarnated inside of her, and all she can say is that she needs to be saved!

If the greatest woman who ever lived states that she needs a Savior, I believe her. I do not believe that she would lie, and even if she did, God certainly would not put that lie in His Word. So, whom should I believe? Mary herself or the lie of the Immaculate Conception which claims that she was conceived without sin? What has happened is that you have the pseudo-Christianization of Minerva, Diana of Ephesus, etc., and the application of these to Mary in fulfillment of the prophecies of Ezekiel and Jeremiah. The Madonna with the baby was originally derived from Tammuz-worship, which Ezekiel contended with. Jeremiah warned of the worship of the Queen of Heaven.

Miriam said she needed a Savior. God would become a Man, take my sin and put it on His Son, the Messiah, and take His righteousness and put it on me. Why should God become a man to take my place?

When I was a young Christian I used the cliché "Jesus is my personal Savior". However, I did not really understand all of what that meant. I thought it meant that He was my personal Savior because I personally accepted Him; but that is only half of what it means. What "personal Savior" means in its totality is that if I was the only person who ever sinned, He would have had to be born of Miriam and gone to that cross and risen from the dead *just for me*. For me alone; why should God die for me, a cocaine addict? Why should God become a man and die for me? Why should He rise from the dead to give me eternal life? Maybe for Miriam we can understand it more; yet she stated her need of a Savior.

The religious people did not think they needed a Savior; they had rituals and celebrations. The devil gets more people into hell with religion than he does with all the dope, all the immorality and gambling and alcohol abuse put together. Arguably, the two most influential people on human civilization have both been Jews: Karl Marx and Jesus Christ. There is a great difference between them; they are, in fact, on opposite ends of the spectrum except on one point: religion is the biggest fraud ever perpetrated on humanity. The Gospel is not religion, it is relationship!

"I need a Savior"; that is what Mary said. She was a teenage girl who was not concerned with Brittany Spears' videos on MTV or with her own personal vanity. Her response was to state her need of a Savior. That is the kind of Jew who was ready for Him to come the first time.

I really like Miriam; I love Miriam, and esteem her. I think Miriam is sensational, is fabulous, is terrific, and I cannot wait to meet her. But I want nothing to do with the blonde bimbo that Mary has become due to the so-called Church.

## **Zecharias & Elizabeth**

Miriam has some family: in Luke 1:5 & 6 we read about them:

*"There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless."*

Now, remember that the Sanhedrin, the clergy, were corrupt – it was a racket. It was Hinn, Copeland, and Hagin; that is what it was like when Jesus came the first time. Yet despite the popular corruption and hypocrisy of the clergy, there were individuals within it who were righteous.

I know individual pastors in the Assemblies of God who are heartbroken over what has happened to that denomination. In England, I know Anglican vicars who are heartbroken over what has happened to the Church of England. I know Baptists who are heartbroken. As bad as it is, and as bad as it is going to get, there will be people like Zacharias who are righteous, devout, and godly. No matter how corrupt the system and its clergy become, they will not go along with it. There may not be many of them, but they will be there. That is the kind of Jew who was ready for Jesus to come the first time, and that is the kind of Christian who will be ready for Him to come again.

## **Simeon**

Let's look still further: in Luke chapter 2:24 we read that Mary brought a pair of turtledoves as her sacrifice; she brought a poor person's offering. There is a liar from America named John Avanzini who came to England and said that Jesus' family was rich, not poor. One of our people asked him publicly at the meeting why, if that was the case, Mary brought a poor person's offering; his response was to have the ushers usher her out. She asked the wrong question.

Luke 2:25:

*"And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him."*

The Sanhedrin did not want Jesus to come; all Jerusalem was troubled, but Simeon was longing for Jesus to come. In fact, it was his only reason for staying alive – verse 26:

*"And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ."*

Under the old Covenant, the Holy Spirit was only for certain people at certain times – high priests, kings, prophets, and certain other individuals. Only *they* had the Holy Spirit in some sense; not until after Pentecost was He for all who believed. The gifts of the Spirit then operated only in a primordial sense in and through those who had them. Verse 27:

*"So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law"*

(They got me when I was a baby, but they sure wouldn't get me now. This, of course, means circumcision. When my son was circumcised at eight days old, I had to hold him and say the Hebrew prayers when the rabbi came in. The rabbi took a cotton ball, dipped it in some wine, and squeezed it into the baby's mouth. I asked what the wine was for, and was told it was to deaden the pain. I said, "If that kid could see that knife, he'd ask for some Jack Daniels.") But to return to the point, verse 28:

*"he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said, 'Lord, You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your Word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel."*

This man, Simeon, was filled with the Holy Spirit and had been promised that he would not die until he had seen the Messiah. He was old, his hair and teeth and eyesight were going, he couldn't get a date, but he knew he would not die until Jesus had come. He had what we call in New Testament terms the gift of faith.

The New Testament does tell us that we all have a measure of faith. We're saved by grace through faith, ([Eph. 2:8](#)) without faith it is impossible to please God, ([Heb. 11:6](#)) and anything not done in faith is sin ([Rom. 14:23](#)), Scripture tells us. Separate from this, however, is the gift of faith, which not all of us have. It is the capacity to trust God absolutely for things that are not specifically written in Scripture, which the Holy Spirit has revealed to you. Most people with this gift are intercessors. Hebrew and Greek both make a distinction between prayer and intercession. People who have this gift can truly intercede in prayer, believing and knowing – not wishfully thinking, or trusting in the futility of their own minds – but holding on to a promise they know by faith that God has truly given them. Although he probably would have denied it himself, I would say that [George Muller](#) in England had that gift of faith; he took in many, many street kids and would need astronomical sums of money by the next day, then pray and miraculously receive it in time.

Just think of this old man, longing for the Consolation of Israel, filled with the Holy Spirit. He only wanted Jesus to come – that was all he cared about, and it was the only reason he had to get out of his bed in the morning.

### **Anna**

Not only was there a little old man, there was also a little old lady. In verse 36 of Luke 2 it says this:

*"Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher."*



(Forget British Israelism and Armstrongism; these people kept their tribal identities into the second and even third centuries.)

*"She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And coming in at that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem."*

For years and years and years all this little old lady did was pray, fast, and serve God in His house. Then she just couldn't stop telling people about Jesus – all those who were looking for the redemption of Israel. The world finds young women attractive; God is different. Read the book of Proverbs – God finds older women attractive, in the spiritual sense. Here was this little old lady, whose whole life was spent in prayer and service to God, and finally in telling people about Jesus. That was the kind of Jew who was ready for Jesus to come the first time; and that is exactly the kind of Christian who will be ready for Him to return.

### **Faithful Shepherds: Then and Now**

But then, back in Luke 2: 8, there were some shepherds:

*"Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.'"*

Followed of course in verse 14 in the Latin Vulgate by, "*Gloria in Excelsis Deo*" – "Glory to God in the highest".

The Hebrew word for "shepherd" and "pastor" is the same word; the same applies in Greek. These are shepherds who watch their flock – not hirelings. There is a great spiritual darkness coming at the end of the age; you have heard me point it out a number of times:

- "Watchman, watchman, how far is the night?" (Is. 21:11)
- "Is He coming in the second watch of the night or the third?" (Mk. 13:35)
- "He is coming like a thief in the night." (1 Th. 5:2)
- "Work while you have the light, for night will come when no man can work." (Jn. 9:4)

But there will be those faithful shepherds who watch over their flock no matter how dark it gets.

I once did a conference with Chuck Missler at which I saw an English-born pastor from Zimbabwe, where terrible things are happening. He was in England for a few days and when asked how he was he replied by expressing his thanks for the prayers said on his behalf. He told us how bad things were in Zimbabwe and that most of the white people as well as the educated blacks had left or were leaving. I asked if I would be seeing him around and he replied that I would not because he was returning to Zimbabwe the next day. "My sheep are there," he said. Here is a white man who gives his whole life to take care of black people who are dying of AIDS; they are his sheep. I know a good Christian doctor who could make a good living in America who is down there with him. They aren't leaving; why? It's a dark place and it's getting darker, but they are shepherds. That is the kind of Jew who was ready for Jesus to come the first time, and that is the kind of Christian who will be ready for Him to return.

### **In Summary**

Who is not going to be ready? "Herod mourned, and all Jerusalem with him." The Sanhedrin were troubled. The theologians were pulling their hair out. They won't be ready – people like that rarely are. But the individual clergy like Zacharias and his dear wife, or Joseph the foster father of Jesus – a man who was just, or a teenage girl who said, "I need a Savior", or the shepherds who watched their flocks, or a little old lady whose whole life was spent in prayer and serving God and telling others about Jesus, or an old man who longed for Him to come and was filled with the Spirit of God – they are a different story. They were the kinds of Jews, who were ready for Him to come the first time, and I promise you, they will be the kinds of Christians who are ready for Him to come the second time.

My prayer for all of you, for your families, for myself and for my family, when I look at these Jews who were ready for His first coming, is that by the grace of the God of Israel we will be among the faithful who will be ready the second time. My dear brethren in Jesus, make no mistake about it: Christmas is coming.

My favorite Christmas carol is *Hark the Herald Angels Sing* for this reason: the music was composed by Felix Mendelssohn, a Jew, and the words were written by Charles Wesley, a Gentile Christian. It is one of the greatest Jew-Gentile collaborations I know of. Would you join me in singing it?

Hark, the herald angels sing,  
Glory to the newborn King!  
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconciled!  
Joyful all ye nations, rise,  
Join the triumph of the skies,

With th'angelic hosts proclaim,  
Christ is born in Bethlehem!  
Hark, the herald angels sing,  
Glory to the newborn King!.



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